



# THE SPY IN BLACK

BY J. STORER CLOUSTON

AUTHOR OF "THE PEER'S PROGRESS," "THE PRODIGAL FATHER," ETC



## PART III CHAPTER VII

(Continued)

"I WAS wondering whether you were a pure German," I added.

"My feelings toward Germany are as strong as yours, Mr. Belke," she answered. "Indeed, I don't think any one can be more loyal to their country than I am. But I am not purely German by blood. My mother was Irish, hence my name—Eileen."

"Then that is your real name?" I cried, between surprise and delight.

"Yes, that is the one genuine thing about me," she smiled.

"But if you are half English"—

"Irish," she corrected.

"Ah!" I cried. "I see—of course. I was going to ask whether your sympathies were not at all divided. But Irish is very different. Then you hate the English with a double hatred?"

"With one or two exceptions—friends I have made—I abhor the whole race. I am fighting against quite as much as you could possibly wish me to. Indeed, I wish it were fighting and not merely plotting."

"There was an earnestness and intensity in her voice and a kindling of her eye as she said this that thrilled and inspired me like a trumpet."

"We shall defeat them—never fear," I cried. "We shall trample on the pride of England. It will be hard to do, but I have no doubt as to the result; have you?"

"None," she said quietly, but with absolute confidence.

Then that quick smile of hers, a little grave, but very charming, broke over her face.

"But let us get away for a little from war," she said. "You aren't smoking. Please do, if you wish to."

I lit a cigarette, and we talked more lightly for a while, or perhaps, I should rather say, less earnestly, for our situation did not lend itself to frivolity. It did lend itself, however, to romance—we two sitting on either side of the peat fire, with a shaded lamp and the friendly flames throwing odd lights and shadows through the low, primitive room with its sloping, atticlike walls and its scanty furniture and the wind all the while tempestuously booming in the chimney and scouring land and sea. And neither on land nor sea was there a single friendly surrounded by enemies who would have given a heavy price to have learned who sat in that room, we talked of many things.

At last, all too soon, she rose and wished me good night. A demon of perversity seized me.

"I shall escort you down to Mr. Tiel, and the devil take his precautions!" I exclaimed.

"Oh, no!" she protested. "After all, he is in command."

She really seemed quite concerned at my intention, but I can be very obstinate when I choose.

"Tut!" I said. "It is sheer rubbish to pretend that there is any risk at this time of night. Probably he is still out, and, anyhow, he will not have visitors at this hour."

She looked at me very hard and quickly, as if to see if I were possible to argue with, and then she gave a little laugh, and merely said:

"You are terribly wilful, Mr. Belke!"

And she ran downstairs very quickly, as though to run away from me. I followed fast, but she was some paces ahead of me as we went down the dark passage to the front of the house. And then suddenly I heard guarded voices, and stopped dead.

There was a bend in the passage just before it reached the hall, and Eileen had passed this, while I had not, and so could see nothing ahead. Then I heard the voice of Tiel say:

"Well?"

It was a simple word of little significance, but the voice in which it was said filled me with a very unpleasant sensation. The man spoke in such a familiar, confidential way that I suddenly felt I could have shot him cheerfully. For the instant I forgot the problem of the other voice I had heard.

"Mr. Belke is with me. He insisted," she cried.

At this I knew that the unknown voice could not belong to an enemy and I advanced again. As I passed the bend in the passage I was just in time to see Tiel closing the front door behind a man in a long, dark coat with a gleam of brass buttons, and to hear him say:

"Good night, Ashington."

Eileen passed into the parlor with a smiling glance for me to follow, and Tiel came in after us. I was not in the most pleasant temper. In fact, for some reason I was in a very black humor.

"I thought you had gone out," I said to him at once.

"I did go out."

"But now I understand that the worthy Captain Ashington has been visiting you here."

"Both these remarkable events have occurred," said Tiel dryly.

When I recalled how long Eileen had been up in my room I realized that this was quite possible, but this did not, for some reason, soothe me.

"Why did he come?" I asked.

"The fleet is going out on Friday,"

"Ah!" I exclaimed, forgetting my annoyance for the moment.

"So that is settled at last," said Tiel, with a satisfied smile.

He happened to turn his smile on Eileen also, and my annoyance returned.

"You dismissed our dear friend Ashington very quickly when you heard me coming," I remarked in no very amiable tone.

Tiel looked at me gravely.

"Belke," he said, "you might quite well have done serious mischief by showing your dislike for Ashington so palpably the other day. Even a man of that sort has feelings. I have soothed them. I am glad to say, but he was not very anxious to meet you again."

"So much the better," said I. "Traitors are not the usual company a German officer keeps."

"Many of us have to mix with strange company nowadays, Mr. Belke," said Eileen.

Her sparkling eye and her grave smile disarmed me instantly. I felt suddenly conscious I was not playing a very judicious part, or showing myself perhaps to great advantage. So I bade them both good night, and returned to my room.

But it was not to go to bed. For two mortal hours I paced my floor, and thought and thought, but not about any problem of the war. I kept hearing Tiel's "Well!" spoken in that hatefully intimate way, and then remembering that those two were alone—all night—in the front part of the house, far out of sound or reach of me. I did not doubt Eileen for an instant, but that calm, cool, cosmopolitan adventurer, who could knock an unsuspecting clergyman on the head and throw him over a cliff and then tell the story with a smile, what was he not capable of?

Again and again I asked myself why I concerned me. This was a girl I had known only for hours. But her smile was the last thing I saw before I fell asleep at length about 3 o'clock in the morning.

## CHAPTER VIII The Decision

IN THE morning I came down to breakfast without asking anybody's leave, and I looked at these two very hard. Eileen fresh and calm and smiling gave me the most intense relief, while as for Tiel, he looked as cool and imperturbable as he always did—and I cannot put it stronger than that, for nothing more cool and imperturbable than Tiel ever breathed. In fact, it could not have breathed, for it would have had to be a graven image.

He looked at me critically, but all he said was:

"If it wasn't too wet for your nice uniform, Belke, we might have had breakfast on the lawn."

"You are afraid some one may come and look in at this window?" I asked.

"On the whole, there is rather more risk of that than of some one climbing up to look in at your bedroom window," said he.

"You think a great deal of risks," I observed.

"Yes," said he. "I am a nervous man."

Eileen laughed merrily, and I could not but confess that for once he had scored. I resolved not to give him the chance again. He then proceeded to draw the table toward one end of the room, pulled the nearest curtain part way across, and then locked the front door. But I made no comment this time.

At breakfast, Eileen acted as hostess, and so charming and natural was she that the little cloud seemed to blow over, and we all three discussed our coming plan of attack on the fleet fully and quite freely. Tiel made several suggestions which he said he had been discussing with Ashington, and as they seemed extremely sound I made notes of them and promised to lay them before Wiedermann.

When he had finished and had a smoke, Tiel rose and said he must go out "on parish business." I asked him what he meant, and learned, to my amusement, that in his capacity of the Reverend Alexander Burnett he had to attend a meeting of what he called the "kirk session."

## Synopsis of the Preceding Instalments

THIS startling novel of the German spy system is mainly the narrative of Lieutenant von Belke, of the German navy, with a few additional chapters by Mr. Clouston. Lieutenant von Belke lands from a submarine, with his motorcycle, upon those islands where the British Grand Fleet has its lair. He carries an important paper, which is to be delivered into the hands of a mysterious personage alluded to as "him."

Part II comprises "a few chapters by the editor," and introduces the Rev. Alexander Burnett, a country clergyman, who is induced to visit a parish on the island just mentioned, with an idea of applying for a clerical vacancy. He is called for by a certain Mr. Taylor, who is to carry him in his auto to the house of the minister's friend, Robert Drummond. At one stage of the journey, which takes place after dark, they leave the car for the purpose of investigating a mysterious light, which the chauffeur has seen. When close to a cliff the minister is struck on the head by this chauffeur, who is the minister's almost exact image.

Then Robert Drummond is visited by a British naval lieutenant, who acquaints him with the news that his friend has just been picked up by a patrol boat, unconscious from a blow on the head and half drowned. The lieutenant carries off with him a telegram Mr. Drummond has previously received, ostensibly from the Rev. Burnett, advising him not to look for him after all, as his plans have altered.

The scene shifts to a mail boat crossing the English Channel. Two persons, a handsome lady named Miss Holland and a man in clerical attire, purporting to be the Rev. Alexander Burnett, of Berwickshire, engage in conversation. When the ship docks they shake hands and separate. Miss Holland gets herself placed in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Craigie as governess to their two young daughters. But shortly thereafter she leaves mysteriously. Mr. Craigie recalls that he has seen a strange clergyman strolling in the vicinity.

Part III resumes the narrative of Lieutenant von Belke, who, obedient to a signal from a window of the nearby manse, pays his respects to one Adolph Tiel, the mysterious person alluded to in the beginning as "him." Tiel is impersonating the Rev. Burnett. Captain Ashington enters the tale, introduced as a British naval officer who has turned traitor, and who is supplying the information about the departure of the fleet. To do so it must pass through a narrow neck of water, and von Belke is to be on hand with four submarines.

Another accomplice enters—a lady this time, presented to von Belke as Miss Burnett. Von Belke, impressed with her beauty, frankly suggests they abandon less important topics and talk about herself.

We both laughed and wished him good luck, and then before he left he said:

"You had better get back to your room, Belke. Remember we are here on business."

And with that he put on his black felt hat, and bade us lock the front door after him, and, if anybody called, explain that it was to keep the wind from shaking it. I must say he thought of these small points very thoroughly.

The suggestion in his last words that I was placing something else before my duty stung me a little. I was not going to let Tiel see that they had any effect, but as soon as he had gone I rose and said to Eileen:

"It is quite clear that I ought to return to my room. I have notes to write up—and several things to do before to-night."

"Then you are really going to leave us to-night?" said she. "I am very sorry."

So was I. Indeed, the thought of leaving her—probably forever—would have been bitter enough in any case, but to leave her alone with Tiel was maddening. It had troubled me greatly last night, yet the thought of remaining was one I did not really care to face.

"I fear I must," I replied in a voice which must have revealed something of what I felt.

"Tiel told me you absolutely refused to listen to him when he wished you to remain."

"Oh, no!" I cried. "That is putting it far too strongly. I offered to put the case to Commander Wiedermann, and then Tiel at once assumed I was going to leave him and told me to say no more about it."

"Really! That is somewhat extraordinary!" she exclaimed in rather a low voice, as though she was much struck with this. She had been standing, and she sat as she spoke. I felt that she wished to go further into this matter, and I sat down again, too.

"What is extraordinary about it?" I asked.

"Do you mean to say that Tiel didn't press you?"

"No," I said.

"Mr. Belke," she said earnestly, "I know enough of the orders under which we are acting and the plans that Tiel has got to further to be quite certain that you were intended to stay and assist him. It is most important."

"You are quite sure of this?"

"Absolutely."

"Then why did Tiel give up trying to persuade me so readily? Why didn't he try to use more authority?"

"I wonder," she said in a musing tone, and yet I could see from her eye that she had an idea.

"You know!" I exclaimed. "Tell me what is in your mind."

Already I guessed, but I dared not put it into words.

"It is difficult to guess Tiel's motives—exactly," she said rather slowly.

I felt I had to say it outright.

"Are you his motive?" I demanded.

She looked at me quickly, but quite candidly.

"I scarcely like to say, or even think such a thing, but—"

She broke off, and I finished her sentence for her.

"But you know he admires you, and is not a man to stick at anything in order to get what he wants."

"Ah, don't be unjust to him!" she answered, and then, in a different voice, added: "But to think of his letting you go like that!"

"So it was to get rid of me, and have you alone here with him?"

"He must have had some motive," she admitted, "for you ought to stay."

"I shall stay," I said.

She gave me her brightest smile.

"Really? Oh, how good of you! Or, rather, how brave of you, for it is certainly running a risk."

If I had been decided before, I was doubly decided now.

"It is not the German navy's way to fear risks," I said. "It is my duty to stay—for two reasons—and I am going to stay!"

"And Commander Wiedermann?"

"I shall simply tell him I am under higher orders, given me by Herr Tiel."

"If you added that there is a second plan directed against the British navy and that you are needed to advise on the details, it might help to convince Commander Wiedermann how essential your presence here is," she suggested.

"Yes," I agreed, "it would be well to mention that."

"Also," she said, "you would require to have all the details of this first plan so fully written out that he would not need to keep you to explain anything."

"You think of everything!" I cried with an admiration I made no pretence of concealing. "I shall go now and set to work."

"Do!" she cried. "And when Tiel comes in I shall tell him you are going to stay. I wonder what he will say."

"I wonder, too," said I. "But do you care what he says?"

"No," she replied, "because, of course, he won't say it. He will only think."

"Let him think," I laughed.

I went back to my room in a strange state of exhilaration for a man who had just decided to forego the thing he had most looked forward to and run a horrible risk instead. For I felt in my bones that, uniform or no uniform, I should be shot if I were caught. I put little trust in English justice or clemency. But, as I said before, when I am obstinate I am very obstinate, and I was firmly resolved that if Wiedermann wanted me back on board to-night he would have to call a guard and carry me. However, acting on Eileen's suggestions, I had little doubt I should convince him. And thereupon I set to work on my notes. By evening I had everything so fully written out and so

clearly explained that I felt I could say with a clear conscience that even my own presence at a council of war could add no further information.

In the course of the day I had a talk with Tiel, and, just as Eileen had anticipated, he left one to guess at what was in his mind. He certainly professed to be glad I had changed my mind, and he thanked me with every appearance of cordiality.

"You are doing the right thing, Belke," he said. "And, let me tell you, I appreciate your courage."

There was a ring of evident sincerity in his voice as he said this, and, whatever I might think of the man's moral character, a compliment from Tiel on one's courage was not a thing to despise.

In the late afternoon he set out to obtain a motor car for the evening's expedition, but through what ingenious machinery of lies he got it I was too busy to inquire.

Finally, about 10 o'clock at night, we sat down to a little supper, my pockets bulging with my notes, and my eyelids overall's lying ready to be donned once more.

## CHAPTER IX On the Shore

SOON after 11 o'clock two dark figures slipped unostentatiously out of the back door, and a moment later a third followed them. My heart leaped with joy and surprise at the sight of it, and Tiel stopped and turned.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"I'm coming, too," said Eileen.

"Why?" he demanded in that tone of his which seemed to call upon the questioner to answer with exceeding accuracy.

"Because I'd like a drive," she answered with a woman's confidence that her reason is good enough for anybody.

"As you please," he said dryly and with unfathomable calm, and then he turned again and in a voice that betrayed his interest in her asked: "What have you got on?"

"Quite enough, thank you."

"You are sure? I've lent my spare coat to Belke, but I can get another rug."

"I am quite sure," she smiled.

More than ever I felt glad I was staying beside her.

Tiel got in front and drove, and Eileen and I got in behind. He offered no objections to this arrangement, though as she seated herself while he was starting the engine he was certainly not given much choice. And then, with a deep purr we rolled off into the night.

There would be no moon till getting on toward morning, but the rain had luckily ceased and the wind fallen, and overhead the stars were everywhere breaking through the last wisps of cloud. Already they gave light enough to distinguish sea from land very plainly, and very soon they faintly lit the whole, wide, treeless countryside. The car was a good one,

however Tiel had come by it, and the engine was pulling well, and we swept along the lonely roads at a great pace, one bare telegraph post after another flitting swiftly out of the gloom ahead into the gloom behind, and the night air rushing against our faces. At first I looked round me and recognized some features of the way we had come—the steep hill and the sound that led to the western ocean and the dark mass of hills beyond—but very soon my thoughts and my eyes alike had ceased to wander out of the car.

We said little, just enough to serve as an excuse for my looking constantly at her profile and admiring every line and curve the more the longer I looked. All at once she leaned toward me and said in a low, beseeching voice:

"You will come back, won't you?"

"I swear it," I answered fervently, and to give force to my oath I gently took her hand and pressed it. If it did not return the pressure it at least did not shrink from my clasp. And for the rest of the way I sat holding it.

Presently I, in turn, leaned toward her and whispered:

"One thing I have been wondering. Should I take Tiel with me to see Wiedermann? It might perhaps be expected."

"No," she replied emphatically.

"You feel sure?"

For reply she very gently pressed my hand at last. So confident did I feel of her sure judgment that I considered that question settled.

"By the way," she said in a moment, "I think perhaps it might be advisable to say nothing to Commander Wiedermann about me. It is quite unnecessary, and he—well, some men are always suspicious if they think there is a woman in the case. Of course I admit they sometimes have enough excuse, but—what do you think?"

"I agree with you entirely," I said emphatically.

I knew Wiedermann very intimately, and had been divided in mind whether I should drop a little hint that there were consolations or whether I had better not. Now I saw quite clearly I had better not.

"What's that?" said Eileen in a moment.

It was a tall, gaunt monolith close to the roadside, and then, looking round, I saw a larch on the other side, and remembered the spot with a start. It was close by here that my cycle had broken down, and we were almost at the end of our drive. Round the corner we swung straight for the sea, until we stopped where the road ended at the edge of the links.

I gave Eileen's hand one last swift pressure, and jumped out.

"We shall wait for you here," said Tiel in a low voice, "but don't be longer than you can help. Remember my nerves!"

He spoke so cheerily and genially that for the moment I liked him again. In fact, if it had not been for Eileen and his love of mystery there was much that was very attractive in Tiel. As I set out on my solitary walk down to the shore I suddenly wondered what made him so cheerful and bright at this particular moment, for it did not strike me as an exhilarating occasion. And then I was reminded of the man I had known most like Tiel, a captain I once served under, who was silence and calmness itself at most times, but grew strangely genial on critical occasions—a heaven-sent gift. But from Tiel's point of view, what was critical about this moment? The risk he ran at this hour in such an isolated spot was almost negligible, and as to the other circumstances, did it matter much to him whether I stayed or changed my mind and went away? I could scarcely believe it.

I kept along by the side of the sandy track, just as I had done before, only this time I did not lose it. The rolling, hummocky links were a little darker, but the stars shone in myriads, bright and clear as a winter's night, and I could see my way well enough. As I advanced, I smelled the same pungent seaweed odor, and heard the same gulls crying disturbed, I hoped, by the same monster in the waters. Fortunately the storm had blown from the southeast, and the sea in this westward-facing bay heaved quietly, reflecting the radiance of the stars. It

was another perfect night for our purpose.

I reached the shore, and turned to the left along the rising circumference of the bay, looking hard into the night as I went. Something dark lay on the water, I felt certain of it, and presently something else dark and upright loomed ahead. A moment later I had grasped Wiedermann by the hand. He spoke but a word of cordial greeting, and then turned to descend to the boat.

"We'll get aboard before we talk," said he.

The difficult moment had come. Frankly, I had dreaded it a little, but it had to be faced and got over.

"I am not coming aboard to-night, sir," I replied.

He turned and stared at me.

"Haven't you settled anything?" he demanded.

"Something," I said, "but there is more to be done."

I told him then, concisely and clearly, what we had arranged, and handed him the chart and all my notes. That he was honestly delighted with my news and satisfied with my own performance there could be no doubt. He shook me warmly by the hand, and said:

"Splendid, Belke! I knew we could count on you. It's lucky you have a chest broad enough to hold all your decorations. For you will get them—never doubt it. But what is all this about staying on shore? What else are you needed for? And who the devil has given you such orders?"

"Herr Tiel," I said. "I was placed under his orders, as you will remember, sir."

"But what does he want you for? And how long does he imagine the British are going to let you stay in this house of yours unsuspected? They are not idiots. It seems to me you have been extraordinarily lucky to have escaped detection so far. Surely, you are not going to risk a longer stay?"

"If it is my duty, I must run the risk."

"But is it your duty? I am just wondering, Belke, whether I can spare you, with this attack coming on, and whether I ought to override Herr Tiel's orders and take the consequences."

I knew his independence and resolution, but just at that moment there passed before my mind's eye such a distinct sweet picture of Eileen that I was filled with a resolution and independence even greater than his.

"If it were not my duty, sir," I said firmly, "clearly and strongly pointed out by Herr Tiel, I should never dream of asking you to spare me for a little longer."

"He was, then, very clear and strong on the question?"

"Extremely."

"And this other scheme of his—do you feel yourself that it is feasible enough to justify you in leaving your ship and running such a terrible risk? Remember, you will be a man lost to Germany."

I have put down exactly what he said, though it convicts me of having departed a little from the truth when I answered:

"Yes, it will justify the risk."

After all, I had confidence enough in Tiel's abilities to feel sure that I was really justified in saying this, but I determined to press him for some details of his plans to-morrow.

Wiedermann stood silent for a moment; then he held out his hand and said in a sad voice:

"Goodly! But my mind misgives me. I fear we may never meet again."

"That is nonsense, sir!" I cried as cheerfully as I could. "We shall meet again very soon. And if you wish something to cheer you, just study